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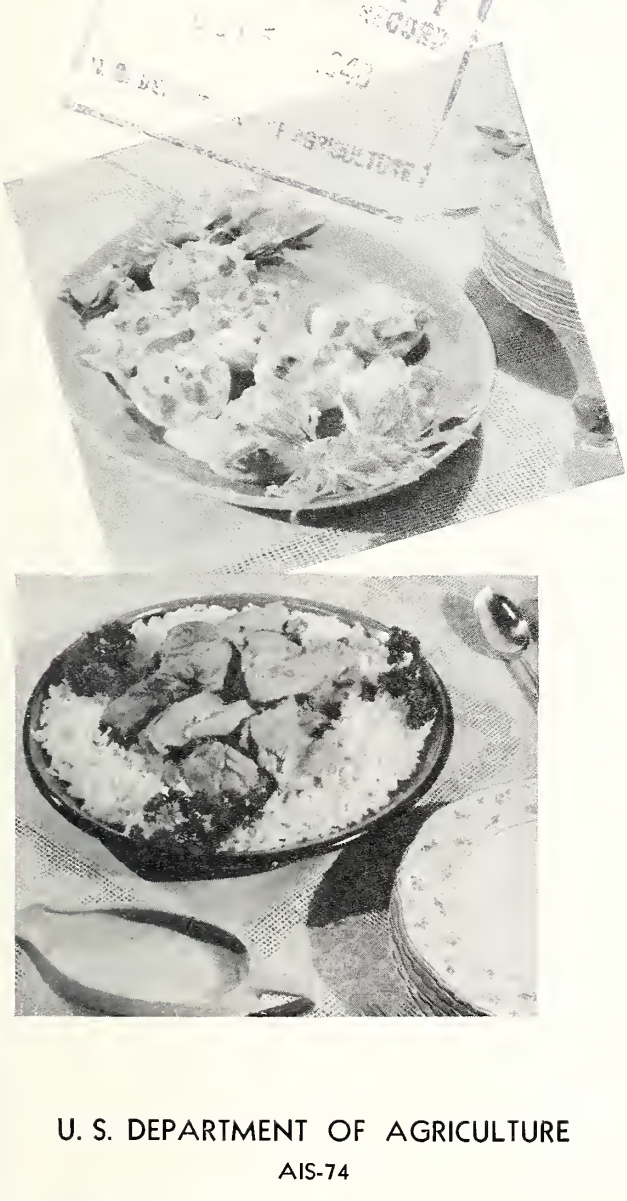
CHICKEN IN THE FREEZER



U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
AIS-74

HOW TO FREEZE STEWING HENS

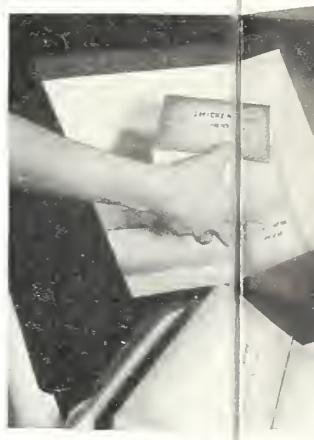
Chicken from the freezer? Yes—for those company meals, planned or unexpected, and to have on hand for extra busy days the year round. Freeze and store excess birds from your flock. Cull the low-producing and the nonlaying hens and put them into the freezer for later use.

Getting chickens ready.—Choose for freezing only healthy, plump birds—and no more than you can handle at one time. Dress and draw fully . . . chill quickly . . . with utmost speed.

Space-saving method.—Separate pieces (breasts, thighs from bony pieces backs, necks). Legs may be inclu

Divide cut-up bird into meaty pieces (breast, thigh, also leg if desired) and bony pieces (wing, back, neck). To save more space in storage, remove bone from leg.

Insert each meaty piece in a fold of cellophane, to prevent freezing together. Pack in medium-sized or small paperboard cartons, lined or covered with cellophane that can be heat-sealed.



Seal cartons with an iron that is w hot. Keep cartons c ld in refrigerator are ready. Place i freezing compart freezer, with space between cartons. promptly.

After cooking bony pieces, strip bones carefully to obtain many good-sized pieces of meat. Cut large pieces into uniform cubes. Measure meat.

To go with the cooked meat, make an equal amount of white sauce, using skimmed fat and stock from the cooked chicken in the sauce. The recipe for creamed chicken gives added details.

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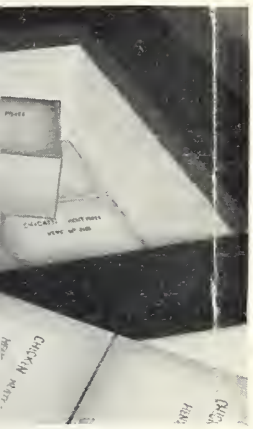

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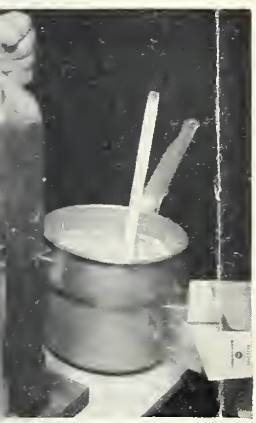

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either meaty or bony pieces. Freeze meaty pieces raw for later use in stew or fricassee. Cook bony pieces, cut the meat from bones, and use the meat to make creamed chicken for freezing and storing in the home freezer or locker.

No need to thaw frozen pieces before starting a chicken stew or fricassee. Let pieces simmer—not boil—for 3 to 4 hours or until the meat is tender.

To serve: Heat frozen chicken in a double boiler about ½ hour. Start with water warm, not hot, in lower pan, so the thawing meat won't stick. If heating several blocks, don't stack—use a wider pan.

Serving Frozen Meaty Pieces Fricassee Style

Place unthawed meaty pieces of two chickens in a kettle, cover with slightly salted water, and simmer 3 to 4 hours, or until tender.

Make a gravy from the broth which remains after cooking, allowing 2 tablespoons of flour to thicken each cup of broth. Season to taste. Reheat chicken in the gravy. (Six servings.)

If desired, add egg yolk to gravy at time of serving—1 egg yolk to 1 quart or less. Beat yolk, stir into it a small portion of gravy, return it to the rest of the gravy and mix well.

Hearty Creamed Chicken for the Freezer

Here is a recipe for creamed chicken that is definitely a chicken dish—half chicken, half sauce—not sauce with a little chicken.

First cook the bony pieces by simmering in salted water until tender. For mild seasoning add a small bag of herbs (¼ teaspoon thyme and ¼ teaspoon marjoram), if you wish. Cool meat quickly in the broth. Skim off the fat for use in white sauce. Remove meat from broth and cut big pieces into uniform cubes.

A guide in figuring amounts: You can get about 3 pints of meat from wings, backs, and necks of 6 hens weighing 5 to 7 pounds (picked, but not drawn). Adding meat from the legs will almost double this amount.

For each 3 pints of cut, cooked chicken, make 3 pints of medium white sauce. For sauce, use—

- ½ cup chicken fat
- ⅞ cup flour
- 3 cups chicken broth
- 3 cups milk
- 1 teaspoon salt

Heat fat, stir in flour; add broth, milk, and salt, and cook over hot water, stirring constantly until thickened. Add the cooked chicken and heat to blend flavors.

Each pint of creamed chicken makes about 3 servings.

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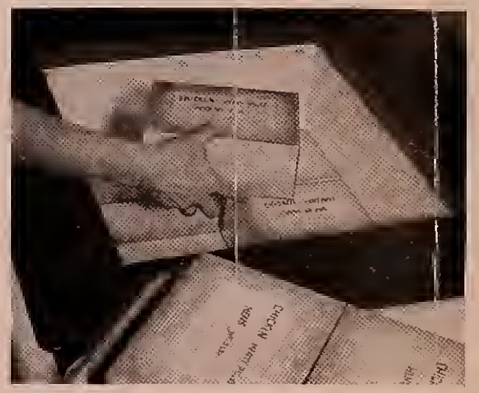

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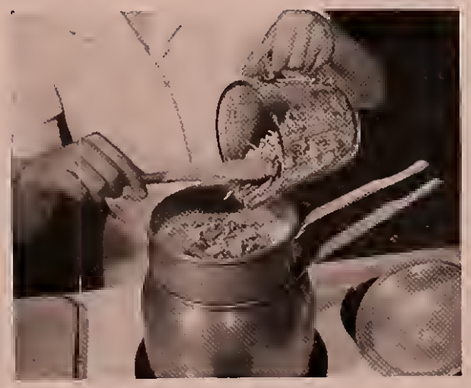

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FREEZING YOUNGER BIRDS

When younger birds—broilers, fryers, ar raasters—ore big enough far table use, it is often economicol to freeze and store them.

Prepore them carefully, chill promptly, ond freeze as saan as cald.

Roasters.—Prepore bird os for cooking. Tie legs and wings tight ta bady to save storage space. Package chilled bird in maisture-vapar-resistant wrapping material. A flexible convas hammock (shawn above) helps ta press wrapping tight against bird ond prevents slipping. Fald securely, pressing ta drive out air. Heat-seal the ends, or snugly tie them, ar seol with cald starage tape. Tie in stackinette.

Broilers.—Remave head and feet fram dressed bird. Cut alang the backbane, apen, and take out entrails. Cut bird in twa alang breastbane (shawn above). Wash well, dry, and chill quickly. Place halves tagether with twa pieces of cellaphane between them. Package like roasting ch ckens.

Fryers.—Prepare dressed chickens for frying. Wash, dry, and chill. Insert each piece in a fald af cellophane and pack tightly in a carton or package that can be heat-sealed. Use medium-sized or small packages ta suit family needs.

Giblets.—Giblets are best used fresh. If they are ta be frazen, clean, wash, dry, and chill them. Put in a separate package for freezing.

WHEN YOU LABEL, PACKAGE, FREEZE, AND STORE

. . . Label.—Mark packages plainly ta save guesswark. Give date and cantents, such as "meaty pieces af stewing hen," or "fryer breasts." Special stamps, inks, labels, and tape ore made far labeling.

Writing labels and making up baxes in advonce is convenient, and speeds the pockaging job. Same packages cannat be labeled after sealing.

. . . Package.—Be sure that cellophane or other wrapping materials are maisture-vapor-resistant.

. . . Freeze and store.—Keep packages af chicken in a refrigeratar until all are ready for freezing. Freeze as soan as passible.

If you take packaged food to o locker, wrap in newspapers ar use an insulated bax, ta help keep it cald an the way. Have food frazen in fast-freezing raom if availoble, before placing in yaur lacker.

If yau have a hame freezer, be sure temperature in the freezing campartment is 0° F. ar lower. Place packages against freezing plates or coils, spacing them so air can mave between them.

Remember that large or heavily wrapped packages take langer ta freeze than thase af medium size with anly enaugh wrapping to pratect the food.

After freezing, stare chicken at 0° F. ar lawer.

THAW AND COOK

You can heat frozen blocks of creamed chicken or stew frozen pieces without waiting to thaw them. But pieces for frying should be thowed first. And a whole or split chicken cooks more evenly if the bird is thawed beforehand.

A 3- or 4-pound bird takes overnight or longer to thaw in a refrigerator. If chicken is thawed at room temperature, cook without delay when thawed.

Placing a chicken in front of an electric fan will speed thowing when necessory. Keep in original package while thawing.

Cook at moderate heat.—Cook chicken from frozen storage like any other meat, ot no higher than moderote temperature.

That is—simmer, don't boil, o fricossee or stew. When braising chicken in the oven in o cosserole dish, use a low temperature—275° F. If roasting a bird, keep oven temperoture down to 350° F. If frying a young bird in shallow fat, keep the heat moderate.

If thawing must be completed during cooking, don't try to speed the process by use of high heot. Allow extra time, so that the meot will thaw ond cook done, oll through.

Other informotion about preporing and cooking chicken is given in Formers' Bulletin 1888, Poultry Cooking.

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Subject matter:
Mary E. Kirkpatrick, Beatrice M. Mountjoy

Written by Emily C. Davis
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